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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on identifying the nature of immediate postsecondary educational activities in a rural area and compares these activities to educational aspirations held in high school. As part of a larger study in the rural Eastern Shore of Virginia, all students in grades 9-12 in Northampton and Accomack Counties were surveyed in 1995. These counties have higher-than-average poverty and unemployment rates and have few employment opportunities that require postsecondary education. This study looks at 11th- and 12th-graders in 1995, who were resurveyed in 1997, after they presumably had graduated. Results indicate that high school students' educational aspirations were significantly related to attending postsecondary education immediately after high school. Students with high aspirations were more likely to attend postsecondary education, including college, than those with low aspirations. Immediately attending postsecondary education was significantly related to father's education, but not to mother's education. Contrary to expectations, youth perceptions of parents' expectations were not significantly related to immediate postsecondary education. Blacks were more likely than Whites to attend vocational-technical training. However, inconsistent with national findings, Whites were not more likely to attend college than Blacks, possibly because of the large number of historically Black colleges nearby. Postsecondary activities did not differ by gender. (Contains 57 references) (SV)

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IMMEDIATE POST HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: A RURAL AREA STUDY

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1999

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IMMEDIATE POST HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: A RURAL AREA STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Social science research on postsecondary educational activities tend to focus on youth educational aspirations and educational attainment. In the extensive literature involving the study of postsecondary education, three questions remain largely ignored: What are the immediate postsecondary educational activities of recent high school graduates? To what extent do these activities resemble their educational aspirations while in high school? What factors help explain differences in young people's immediate postsecondary educational activities?

While immediate postsecondary educational activities have traditionally been neglected in scholarly literature, these activities nonetheless have important implications for the youth themselves as well as for the geographic area in which they live. Postsecondary education is important for youth themselves because it is related to future income (Akerhielm, Berger, Hooker, and Wise 1998). Recognizing its importance, many youth equate education with both eventual occupational and income attainment. As Gray and Herr (1995:7) note, the American Council on Education annual survey of more than 200,000 college freshmen indicates that the main reason for enrolling was "to get a better job." The second most cited reason was the belief that education would enhance their income.

Postsecondary education is also important to the future growth and development of the area itself in which these youth live. Evidence suggests these new entrants to the workforce will be increasingly required to have more education and greater skills than their predecessors (Reid 1989) as jobs increasingly require a college education (Cowher 1994). Therefore, an area's youth must be

adequately prepared, largely expressed through their education, for an ever changing workplace. A workplace that, as Reid (1989:17) suggests, requires the workforce to "work smarter, not just harder."

In order to increase or even maintain the economic vitality of an area, however, residents may have to increasingly turn to "self-development" efforts (Reid 1989:22). Reid (1989) notes this may be especially important in rural areas where characteristics such as geographic isolation along with relatively low educational attainment level make the rural area unattractive to many existing businesses looking to relocate. Thus, it will be recent high school graduates who are charged with finding ways to sustainably develop their own communities or develop their communities in ways that are congruent with the interconnected principles of "social equity, economic vitality, and environmental integrity" (Durham, Danner, Seyfrit, and Flint 1997:10). It is through knowledge and education, that the workforce can learn to cultivate the necessary "skills" for self-development within the rural community (Reid 1989:22).

The focus of this investigation is on Virginia's rural Eastern Shore which comprises Northampton and Accomack counties. In addition to relative geographic isolation, Virginia's Eastern Shore experiences many of the problems typically associated with rural areas. Compared to the rest of the state (10 percent), both Northampton (27 percent) and Accomack (20 percent) counties have high poverty rates (U.S. Census Bureau 1996a). Data from the 1990 Census indicate that the percent of high school graduates among residents of Northampton County (57 percent) and Accomack County (60 percent) is lower than that of the state of Virginia (75 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau 1996a). Likewise, data from the 1990 Census also indicate that the percent of college graduates among residents of Northampton County (12 percent) and Accomack County (9 percent)

is lower than that of the state of Virginia (25 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau 1996a). This may be partially due to the flight of many of the more educated rural persons to cities where the pay and work opportunities are greater than the rural area typically offers (McGranahan 1988). Both Northampton and Accomack counties (8 percent each) also have high unemployment rates relative to the rest of the state (5 percent) (Virginia Employment Commission 1996a and 1996b).

Not surprisingly then, rural persons like Eastern Shore youth are limited in their employment opportunities. Most of the available employment opportunities on the Eastern Shore are in manufacturing, service, government, trade, and agriculture (Virginia Employment Commission 1996a and 1996b). Manufacturing and production industries in rural areas, such as the Eastern Shore, tend to locate their managerial and research related activities in metropolitan areas and do mostly "routine" work in the rural area (McGranahan 1988:8). Resource industries (agriculture, forestry, and fishing) generally provide only a few "management and professional-technical jobs" (McGranahan 1988:8). While a large number of persons are employed in government related jobs, many of them are employed in clerical positions where postsecondary education is rarely a prerequisite.

This suggests that white-collar jobs, such as those jobs that are professional, technical, and research related, make up a relatively small percentage of the occupational opportunities available to recent high school graduates on the Eastern Shore. Therefore, there is a lack of the greater economic rewards and benefits that are often associated with these types of jobs and opportunities. Thus, there may be less an "incentive" for youth to enter and stay in postsecondary education such as college (Paasch and Swaim 1995:25)

Hence, postsecondary education is vital for the prospects of recent high school graduates and

the area in which they live. In this paper we focus on identifying the nature of immediate post high school educational activities in a rural area. After a description of immediate postsecondary educational activities of youths, we analyze potential factors (e.g., parents' education, perceived parents' expectations, race, and sex) associated with these activities including an examination of the relationship between educational aspirations and immediate post high school educational activities.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Previous research suggests several variables that may account for differences in postsecondary educational activities. One factor consistently shown to be related to postsecondary educational activities are educational aspirations. A significant correlation between educational and occupational aspirations and subsequent educational and occupational attainment or achievement has consistently been found (Porter 1974; Sewell and Hauser 1975; Wilson, Peterson, and Wilson 1993). This has also been found to be true of educational aspirations and educational attainment specifically (Spenner and Featherman 1978; Thomas 1980; Gottfredson 1981). Educational and occupational aspirations have also been found to be correlated (Sewell and Hauser 1972) evidencing the fact that occupations are associated with a certain level of education or "know how." Ayalon and Yuchtman-Yaar (1989) actually found high occupational expectations among students with relatively low educational expectations perhaps implying student naivety of what education is required to enter particular occupations.

Aspirations are also often not matched by available opportunity (Jacobs, Karen, and McClelland 1991; Paasch and Swaim 1995). A "disconnection" or incompatibility between the two is evidenced by high aggregate aspirations but only limited availability of attaining these high

educational aspirations within the geographic region (Paasch and Swaim 1995:31). This leaves many youth to seek attainment of the aspiration through migration, retain the aspiration with limited chance of actually achieving it, or readjust their aspiration.

Another set of variables suggested to impact postsecondary educational activities are parents' education. As McBroom (1985:115) suggests, the education levels of parents act as an "incentive" to youths and may afford them an "advantage" as they seek to acquire certain "statuses" throughout their lifetime. In a youth's pursuit of education, parental educational level has consistently been shown to be related to the youth's likelihood of attending postsecondary education.

Parental education has been shown to be related to adolescent educational aspirations (Hossler and Stage 1992) as well as actual educational attainment of youth (Picou and Howard 1978; Teachman 1987; Sarigiani, Wilson, Petersen, and Vicary 1990). This relationship has also been shown to exist in rural areas specifically (Picou and Howard 1978; Sarigiani et al. 1990). Evidence of the importance of parental education also exists in the data from the 1988 National Longitudinal Study, Youth Cohort (NLSY) and a 1998 NLSY follow-up study. Data from these studies show that while only 33 percent of students whose parents have "less than a high school degree attend any form of postsecondary education, 90 percent of students whose parents have an advanced degree have attended postsecondary education" (Akerhielm et al. 1998:15).

Parental education is also generally regarded as an important element of "status dimension" (Haller and Portes 1973:52). Socioeconomic status (SES), including parental education, has been found to be strongly related to the educational expectations of youth (Farmer 1985; Hossler and Stage 1992; Wilson and Wilson 1992; Trusty 1998) and to be related to the actual level and type of

education youth are likely to attain (Rehberg and Hotchkiss 1979; Wilson et al. 1993).

Parental education is expected to impact the postsecondary educational activities of recent high school graduates in two ways. Increased parental education is often associated with increased parental resources which may in part be allocated to children for furtherance of their education. The second way that parental education may impact post high school educational activities of students are through student role-modeling of their parents. As previously indicated, advanced forms of education may translate into occupations that provide greater incomes and opportunity.

When parents have greater income and wealth, they may be able to make more opportunities available to their children and provide them with a better learning environment. Teachman (1987:548) suggests that increased education, when coupled with a greater income, affords parents the opportunity to create "educational resources" for their children. These educational resources, according to Teachman (1987:548), include material and nonmaterial "items" that could be used as tools for furthering the education of their children. Living in a period of rapid technological advancement, these advantages may also exist in the various forms of electronic related learning devices, such as computers and educational software, which children who have increased resources at their disposal are more likely to possess.

Van Hook (1993:218) suggests that parents' education affects children "both directly and indirectly" as "parents model and transmit their values, expectations, and opportunities" to subsequent generations. Role-modeling is the process whereby youths come to imitate those characteristics and desires of their parents. What this suggests, then, is that in the realm of education, youth may desire and plan to attain a level and type of education that is comparable to the value that parents have placed on education--largely evidenced through actual parental educational

attainment.

Previous research indicates that role model availability in rural areas may be limited by the increased likelihood of low-level occupations and lack of professional occupations in the rural marketplace (Paasch and Swaim 1995). Likewise, the lack of these types of occupations in the marketplace mean that the parents of rural youths are not likely to be employed in these positions and, hence, are not likely to have the advanced education largely associated with these positions. Consequently, rural youth may be less likely to aspire to and seek to attain these types of education.

As Falk and Salter (1978) note, role-modeling may be apparent when the educational aspiration or attainment level of the child is correlated with either one or both parents. Some studies have found one parent to have overall greater effects. For both boys and girls, McBroom (1985) found mothers' education to have greater individual and overall importance on youth educational aspirations than fathers. Some studies have found no evidence that the same-sex parent had the greater influence on educational attainment (McClendon 1976). In a study of low income Appalachian families, Wilson et al. (1993) found fathers' education to be a greater predictor of educational attainment than mothers' for both sons and daughters.

Much of the existing literature has emphasized the role of parent's expectations on postsecondary educational activities. Parents probably have an edge over all other persons in the lives of their children as they provide a "continual and stable" influence on a child over the course of the child's lifetime (Trusty 1998:260). With respect to education, parents base expectations for their children partially "on their own level of educational attainment" as they expect the child to attain a level of education that is at least comparable to theirs, if not greater (Rosen and Aneshensel 1978:181).

Research suggests that parental expectations may be the most important indicators of the educational expectations of adolescents (Davies and Kandel 1981; Looker and Pineo 1983). Gray and Herr (1995) note that if parental influence is as great as is assumed, increased rates of college attendance since the 1970s should have coincided with increased parental expectations. They found support for this using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 and 1992, as "on average, the go-to-college message from parents has increased by 15 percent to 20 percent from 1982 to 1992 for both males and females" to similar amounts of about 80 percent (Gray and Herr 1995:23-24).

Sociodemographic factors such as race and sex may also account for variation in postsecondary educational activities. While evidence has shown that the "improvement of educational attainment" among racial minorities has lessened "inequality in earnings" (Sandefur and Pahari 1989:217), racial inequality in both earnings (Bridges and Villemez 1994; Beggs 1995) and education persists in American society today (Smith 1997). Racial inequality is further evidenced in measured differences in educational and occupational mobility (Farley and Allen 1989; Jaynes and Williams 1989). While education has been shown to be a more powerful indicator of occupational status and earnings for whites than for blacks (Hofferth and Moore 1979; Garfinkel and McLanahan 1986; McCrate 1989), it still provides perhaps the most salient tool for social mobility for all groups. Nevertheless, the postsecondary educational activities of blacks may differ from those of whites in a number of ways.

Most students who ever enroll in college will do so immediately after completing high school (Smith 1997). For whites, immediate college enrollment was found to be around 50 percent in the early 1970s and has consistently ranged from 60 percent to 65 percent until the mid-1990s

(Smith 1997). Blacks, however, have had consistently lower immediate enrollment into college. While immediate enrollment for blacks rose to almost 50 percent by 1978, an amount almost equal to that of whites, it then fluctuated dramatically until the late 1980s where it has leveled off around 50 percent since the mid-1990s (Smith 1997).

Some research indicates that the proportion of youths who have delayed entry into college were similar for both blacks and whites (Smith 1997). Other evidence, however, shows that delayed entry among blacks explains much of the current gap in enrollment (Hauser 1991). Blacks do not make up this race gap in college attendance, at least not by age 25 (U.S. Census Bureau 1995b). Of those persons who are 18 to 24 years of age, blacks have consistently been found to have lower rates of college enrollment than whites (U.S. Census Bureau 1995b). Consequently, evidence indicates that, in 1994, blacks (36 percent) between these ages were less likely than whites (43 percent) to be enrolled in college (U.S. Census Bureau 1995b).

While blacks have demonstrated a lower likelihood of attending college than whites, they, conversely, are more likely to attend postsecondary education that is vocationally oriented. For example, blacks are more likely than whites to consider attending vocational school (Dai 1996), and they have a disproportionately high representation in less than four year institutions that only offer "terminal awards and certificates" (National Center for Education Statistics 1998:148).

Similarly, blacks are more likely to consider attending community college (Dai 1996) which are often said to be vocationally oriented to a large degree (U.S. Department of Education 1994). They are more likely to plan on entering community college as a beginning of postsecondary education (Wilson 1994), and they continue to enter community colleges immediately after high school at a disproportionately high rate compared to whites (Dai 1996; Smith 1997).

Although race differences in educational activities remain pronounced, the historic gap in education between men and women continues to narrow. Historically, females have had lower postsecondary education completion rates (U.S. Census Bureau 1998; U.S. Department of Education 1994) and lower rates of postsecondary educational enrollment and attainment than males (U.S. Census Bureau 1996b). Recent evidence, however, indicates that not only has the gender gap in postsecondary completion rates narrowed, but females have actually surpassed males in both postsecondary education attendance and completion rates.

Evidence suggests that immediately after high school, females (63 percent) are slightly more likely than males (61 percent) to enroll in college (U.S. Census Bureau 1996b). According to 1994 data, of those high school graduates age 18 to 24, females (43 percent) had slightly outnumbered males (42 percent) in college enrollment (U.S. Census Bureau 1995b). This represents a substantial turn around from just ten years earlier, where males (36 percent) between these ages were more likely than females (30 percent) to be enrolled in college (U.S. Census Bureau 1995b).

While females are more likely than males to attend four year colleges, evidence also indicates that females are more likely to enroll in postsecondary institutions other than four year colleges such as community colleges (National Center for Education Statistics 1998). Similarly, they also have a disproportionately high representation in less than four year institutions that are vocationally oriented in which only "terminal awards or certificates" are offered (National Center for Education Statistics 1998:148).

Overall, females are more likely than males to attain some form of advanced education (including public and private, four and less than four year institutions). Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study which followed 1988 eighth graders through 1994 or two

years after high school, the proportion of females who had attended some form of postsecondary education (65 percent) were more than the proportion of males (60 percent) (Akerhielm et al. 1998). Moreover, the U.S. Census Bureau (1998) reports that in 1997, for persons age 25 to 29, females had surpassed males in actual college completion levels, 29 percent to 26 percent.

DATA

THE SAMPLE

The data for the present examination were gathered as part of a larger study of the attitudes and experiences of Eastern Shore adults and youth. Particular attention was focused on adult residents' and youths' opinions of the community and the environment as well as youths' perceptions of their secondary educational experiences, postsecondary plans and their activities. The larger study was conducted by Dr. Carole Seyfrit with support from the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The current study examines the data gathered from Eastern Shore high school youth as part of an initial 1995 survey and a 1997 follow-up survey. The respondents in the 1997 follow-up survey consisted of those 11th and 12th grade participants in the initial study who had presumably since graduated high school (the class of 1995 and 1996). The initial survey was administered in the Spring of 1995 to all 9th through 12th graders in both Northampton and Accomack Counties. This included all five public schools in the two counties in addition to the one private school. For the purposes of these analyses, only those youth who were then 11th and 12th graders were examined since they would have likely graduated from high school at the time of the follow-up survey. In the Spring of 1997, the follow-up survey was mailed. Responses were elicited following a two-wave mail-survey design, a modification of Dillman's (1978) method. The data for this study include

only those youth who completed the first survey while they were 11th and 12th grade high school students and responded to the follow-up survey.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

The dependent variables were measured in the follow-up survey. Our empirical strategy involves the creation of a series of dependent variables that measure postsecondary educational activities. For bivariate analyses, a single measure consisting of three categories was constructed: no postsecondary education, all of those who attended vocational-technical training, and those who attended college only.

Three models of logistic regression were utilized involving the creation of a series of dichotomous measures of postsecondary educational activity. (1) To determine the likelihood of not getting any immediate postsecondary education compared to those who did. (2) To ascertain the likelihood of those getting only a college education against all others. (3) To assess the likelihood of getting vocational-technical training against all others.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

All six independent variables were measured in the initial survey. Race is coded as a dichotomous variable of Black/African American and White/Caucasian (White = 1). Sex is coded as a dichotomy (Male = 1). The independent variable parents' expectation was initially measured using students' response to the statement, "My parents do not want me to go to college." As a measure of perceived strength of parental desire for college, we coded responses of strongly disagree 1 (otherwise 0). Hence, we argue that the most robust sentiment toward favoring postsecondary education in the

form of college came from those youth who strongly disagreed with the statement.

The independent variable educational aspiration was assessed by asking students to "Check the highest level of education you think you will complete." The response categories are listed in Table 1. Also contained in Table 1, are the similar set of response categories used to measure both mother and father's education.

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Following a descriptive analysis, bivariate correlations were then assessed in order to initially estimate potential differences in immediate postsecondary educational activities. Given its appropriateness for measuring the association between ranked data, Spearman's rho were used to assess the statistical significance between postsecondary educational activity and the independent variables educational aspiration, mother's education, and father's education (Bohrnstedt and Knoke 1988). Chi-square analyses were used to test the null hypotheses that no significant differences existed between the immediate postsecondary educational activities and the individual independent variables race, sex, and parental expectations.

Multivariate analyses were then conducted using three logistic regression models. Chi-square results provided by the logistic regression were used to assess whether each model as a whole explained a significant amount of the variance in postsecondary educational activities. In addition, McFadden's r-square estimated the amount of variance in postsecondary educational activities explained by the independent variables collectively. The odds ratio indicated the influence of a one-unit change in the individual independent variables on the log odds of immediately attending postsecondary education (Retherford and Choe 1993). Each model contained all six of the

independent variables listed above in addition to one of the three dummy dependent variables. The three models show the effects of the set of predictor variables on getting some postsecondary education, on going to college only, and on getting vocational-technical training, respectively.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION AND BIVARIATE ANALYSES

Table 1 contains univariate summary statistics for the sample. How pervasive is the "go to college" message? Table 1 indicates that more than two thirds of the youth (67 percent) sampled have attended college only. Contrastingly, only 20 percent of the respondents have received vocational-technical training.

Using chi-square, bivariate analyses were conducted as an initial assessment of whether each of the independent variables were related to type of immediate postsecondary educational activity. These results are presented in Tables 2 through 5. With the exception of sex, all of the independent variables (educational aspirations, mother's education, father's education, perception of parent's expectations, and race) were found to be significantly related to type of immediate postsecondary educational activity ($p<.05$).

LIKELIHOOD OF GETTING A POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Table 6 presents the results of the logistic regression. In Model 1, the influence of the set of independent variables on the likelihood of getting an immediate postsecondary education (coded 0 for no postsecondary education, 1 for some postsecondary education) was modeled. The model explained a significant but modest amount of the variance (29 percent) in the dependent variable

(chi-square=44.67, p<.05). Among the independent variables, only educational aspirations and fathers' education were significantly associated with changes in likelihood of immediately attending postsecondary education. A unit change in educational aspirations was associated with a 95 percent increase in the odds of immediately attending postsecondary education while a unit change in fathers' education was associated with a 112 percent increase in the odds of immediately getting some postsecondary education.

LIKELIHOOD OF GETTING A COLLEGE EDUCATION ONLY

Model 2 estimates the influence of the set of independent variables on the likelihood of immediately getting a college education only (coded 0 for all others, 1 for those who only attended college). The model explained a significant but modest amount of the variance (37 percent) in the dependent variable (chi-square=92.26, p<.05). Similar to Model 1, the main finding in Model 2 is that only educational aspirations and father's education are statistically significant. A unit change in educational aspirations was associated with a 197 percent increase in the odds of immediately attending college only while a unit change in fathers' education was associated with a 77 percent increase in the odds of immediately attending college only.

LIKELIHOOD OF GETTING A VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Model 3 shows the influence of the set of independent variables on the likelihood of getting vocational-technical training (coded 0 for all others, 1 for those who all those received vocational-technical training). The model explained a relatively small but significant amount of the variance (18 percent) in the dependent variable (chi-square=34.70, p<.05). Educational aspirations continued

to be a strong predictor as a unit change in educational aspirations was associated with a 40 percent decrease in the odds of immediately getting vocational-technical training. We attribute this negative relationship to the inclusion of those who had attended college into the "all other" response category. The tool used to measure educational aspirations ranks vocational education only slightly higher than high school education, near the base of the measurement scale. Given this fact, one might logically expect the inclusion of those who had attended college into the "all other" category to have scores inflated above those in the category containing only those who had attended vocational-technical training. Race is also of statistical significance as the odds of a black student immediately attending vocational-technical training were 67 percent greater than for white students.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Previous research has focused on determinants of educational aspirations and attainment while ignoring immediate postsecondary educational activities. The significance of this study is the broadening of the literature on youth and postsecondary educational activities to include an examination of not only what these immediate postsecondary educational activities are, but also the forces that influence these activities. This becomes especially important in rural areas such as Virginia's Eastern Shore where resident quality of life is challenged by high poverty rates, relatively low resident educational attainment levels, high unemployment, and a lack of work opportunities that typically require postsecondary education. To better understand the nature of immediate postsecondary educational activities in a rural area, our study explores several variables of possible influence.

Our findings suggest educational aspirations to be a key variable in the understanding of

immediate postsecondary educational activities. Specifically, we found educational aspirations to be significantly related to likelihood of having immediately attended postsecondary education, likelihood of having only attended college, and likelihood of having attended vocational-technical training. Consistent with previous research (Gottfredson 1981), students with high educational aspirations are more likely to have attended postsecondary education, including college, than those students with low educational aspirations. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of educational aspirations in immediate postsecondary educational activity.

Our results also show fathers' education to be significantly related to likelihood of immediately attending postsecondary education as well as likelihood of only attending college. Mothers' education, however, was not a significant determinate of likelihood of immediately attending postsecondary education in any of the models. These results are inconsistent with McBroom's (1985) findings that found mothers' education to have a greater impact on student educational aspirations than fathers' education. These findings lend support, however, to previous research that has found fathers' education to have a greater impact on educational attainment than mothers' education (Wilson et al. 1993). The results of this study, then, extend the importance of parental education to youth's immediate postsecondary activities.

Contrary to expectations, youth perceptions of parents' expectations were not significantly related to immediate postsecondary educational activity. These findings are especially inconsistent with the results of previous research that has found parental expectations to be the single greatest indicator of youth educational expectations (Davies and Kandel 1981; Looker and Pineo 1983). Given these surprising results, an alternative measure of the concept should be included in future research.

Another important outcome of this study is the finding that race is a critical factor in likelihood of immediately attending vocationally-oriented postsecondary education. This finding supports recent national level data that suggests blacks are more likely than whites to attend vocational-technical training (National Center for Education Statistics 1998). Given the greater immediate economic incentives and its overall usefulness considering area employment opportunities, vocational-technical training proved to be the most salient immediate postsecondary educational option for black youth. Our results, however, are not consistent with recent national surveys that found whites more likely than blacks to attend college (U.S. Census Bureau 1995b). Given the fact that a large number of the closest surrounding colleges are historically black, these findings lend support to others (Monk-Turner 1998) who suggest potential race differences in college enrollment may be ameliorated where predominantly minority colleges exist.

Our analyses, however, found no significant differences in postsecondary educational activities in terms of the sex of the youth. These findings do not support recent national surveys that show females as more likely than males to immediately attend some form of postsecondary education overall (Akerhielm et al. 1998), including both college (U.S. Census Bureau 1995b), and vocational-technical training (National Center for Education Statistics 1998). In our study, the decreased likelihood of females being in vocational-technical training may in part reflect disparate area job training needs. Females dominate enrollment in vocational business programs such as those that are secretarial and administrative support related which are less likely to require vocational-technical training programs as a condition of employment.(Arum and Shavit 1995). Conversely, there is a high concentration of manufacturing jobs in the region providing many skilled manual occupations. These skilled manual occupations require training in trade and technical

programs which males dominate in terms of enrollment (Arum and Shavit 1995).

In sum, this study makes several contributions to the emerging literature on immediate postsecondary educational activities. We expose educational aspirations as having a significant influence on immediate postsecondary educational activities. Fathers' education was determined to have a significant influence on likelihood of having immediately attended postsecondary education and likelihood of having only immediately attended college. Race was found to have a significant effect on the likelihood of having attended vocational-technical training. While our findings expose these factors as being important indicators of immediate postsecondary educational activity, each of our models explained only a modest amount of the variance in immediate postsecondary educational activities. These results suggest the existence of forces of influence not examined here. We call for further exploration in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of immediate postsecondary educational activities.

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Table 1. Univariate Statistics

Variable	N	Percent
Race		
White/Caucasian	149	76.02
Black/African American	47	23.98
Sex		
Male	78	39.80
Female	118	60.20
Parent's Don't Expect College		
strongly disagree	48	24.49
all others	148	75.51
Educational Aspiration		
less than high school		
high school diploma/GED	16	8.16
tech./trade school	17	8.67
some college or Associate's degree	22	11.22
Bachelor's degree	68	34.69
graduate/prof. degree	73	37.24
Mother's Education		
less than high school	18	9.18
high school diploma/GED	75	38.27
tech./trade school	14	7.14
some college or Associate's degree	38	19.39
Bachelor's degree	22	11.22
att/comp grad. school	29	14.80
Father's Education		
less than high school	31	15.82
high school diploma/GED	65	33.16
tech./trade school	13	6.63
some college or Associate's degree	40	20.41
Bachelor's degree	21	10.71
att/comp grad. school	26	13.27

Table 1. Continued

Dependent Variable	N	Percent
Bivariate Analyses		
No Postsecondary Education	26	13.27
All Who Attended Vo-Tech	39	19.89
Attended College Only	131	66.84
Model 1		
No Postsecondary Education	26	13.27
All Others	170	86.73
Model 2		
College Education Only	131	66.84
All Others	65	33.16
Model 3		
All Who Attended Vo-Tech	39	19.90
All Others	157	80.10

Table 2. Bivariate Analyses Using Spearman's rho

	Spearman's rho
Educational Aspiration	.5230*
Mother's Education	.3112*
Father's Education	.4301*

*p<.05

Table 3. Chi-square Analysis: Race by Postsecondary Education

	Postsecondary Education		
Education	No P.S. Training	Vo-tech Only	College
	%	%	%
Race	(N)	(N)	(N)
Black	14.89	36.17	48.94
	(7)	(17)	(23)
White	12.75	14.77	72.48
	(19)	(22)	(108)

Chi-square= 11.3149*, Cramer's V= .2403
(df=2)

*p<.05

Table 4. Chi-square Analysis: Sex by Postsecondary Education

Education	Postsecondary Education		
	No P.S. Training	Vo-tech Only	College
Sex	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Female	14.41 (17)	16.95 (20)	68.64 (81)
Male	11.54 (9)	24.36 (19)	64.10 (50)

Chi-square= 1.7319, Cramer's V= .0940
(df=2)

*p<.05

Table 5. Chi-square Analysis: Parental Expectations by Postsecondary Education

Education	Postsecondary Education		
	No P.S. Training	Vo-tech Only	College
College Not Expected	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Strongly Disagree	10.81 (16)	15.54 (23)	73.65 (109)
All Others	20.83 (10)	33.33 (16)	45.83 (22)

Chi-square= 12.7070*, Cramer's V= .2546
(df=2)

*p<.05

Table 6. Logistic Regression of Postsecondary Education on Sex, Race, Educational Aspiration, Parent's Expectation, Mother's Education, and Father's Education

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	ExpB	s.e.	ExpB	s.e.	ExpB	s.e.
Race	.54	(.321)	2.15	(.951)	.33*	(.141)
Sex	1.43	(.783)	.93	(.405)	1.42	(.596)
Educational Aspiration	1.96*	(.387)	2.98*	(.621)	.60*	(.099)
Mother's Education	1.40	(.326)	.93	(.152)	1.15	(.183)
Father's Education	2.13*	(.572)	1.77*	(.296)	.79	(.122)
Parent's Expectations	.71	(.403)	1.69	(.759)	.47	(.204)
McFadden r-square	.29		.37		.18	

*p<.05

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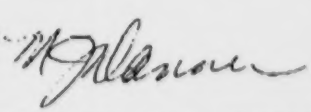
Signature: 

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